

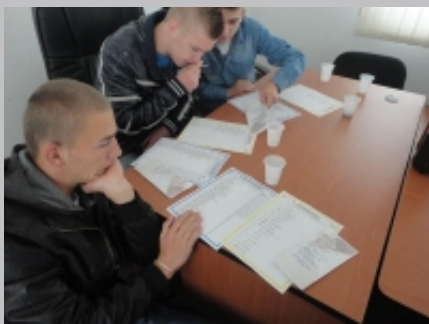




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ECMI in the Media

Coverage of the visit of the High Commissioner on National Minorities, Ms. Astrid Thors, to language courses in Fushë Kosovë/Kosovo Polje:

by Klan Kosova, starting from 13:50: [Lajmet qëndrore](#)

by RTK, starting from 14:30: [Lajme](#)

by the Office of the Language Commissioner: [Language Commissioner Slavisa Mladenovic and Ms. Astrid Thors, the OSCE High Commissioner on National Minorities visited the municipality of Fushë Kosova/Kosovo Polje](#)

Erasmus Mundus Scholarship Call for Applications

JoinEU-SEE is offering mobility scholarships for students at undergraduate, master and doctoral level, as well as for post-doctoral fellows and academic and administrative university staff from Kosovo and other Western

In Focus

Voter Education Campaign ahead of the Local Elections

Throughout the month of October 2013, ECMI Kosovo implemented a comprehensive voter education campaign in Serb-majority municipalities of Kosovo. A total of 28 focus groups were organised, including in northern Kosovo, to discuss upcoming elections. The campaign targeted specific groups living in these municipalities, such as youth, women, and elderly Roma, Ashkali and Egyptians. Overall, more than 450 voters were directly reached, and more than 6,000 indirectly through posters and leaflets. 37% of the participants were women. ECMI-facilitated discussions were politically neutral and aimed to encourage civic participation by explaining modalities of the elections and debating about the main issues at stake. In addition, ECMI Kosovo produced two TV clips targeting young Kosovo Serbs, accessible on our [YouTube channel](#) and broadcasted by RTK2 on a daily basis. These activities were organised with the support of the Ministry for Foreign Affairs of Finland.

In this newsletter, you will find information on:

- [ECMI Kosovo's Work](#)
- [Institutional Developments](#)
- [Political Developments](#)

ECMI Kosovo's Work

Visit of the OSCE High Commissioner on National Minorities Ms. Astrid Thors to Language Courses in Fushë Kosovë/Kosovo Polje

On 23 October, the OSCE High Commissioner on National Minorities, Ms. Astrid Thors, during her first visit to Kosovo, visited the language training programme for municipal officials in Fushë Kosovë/Kosovo Polje implemented by ECMI Kosovo. In her speech to the media, Ms. Thors highlighted the importance of official language acquisition for civil servants as a means for all communities to benefit from public services and for better communication between communities in linguistically diverse societies. Following her speech to the media (see column on the left for media coverage of the event), Ms. Thors thanked ECMI Kosovo for the support and implementation of the project. ECMI Kosovo, supported by the OSCE High Commissioner on National Minorities and the Office of the Language Commissioner, has been providing Albanian and Serbian language courses to municipal officials since 2011. This year, around 300 municipal officials are being trained in 10 Kosovo municipalities.

Albanian Language Courses Now Offered Also for Officials in Northern Kosovo

On 29 October 2013, ECMI Kosovo started providing the first Albanian language class for Serbian-speaking officials working in northern Kosovo. A

Balkans countries. The Erasmus Mundus JoinEU-SEE>PENTA includes a monthly subsistence allowance, insurance, travel and visa costs, insurance costs and tuition fees (if applicable). Deadline for applications is 1 February 2014. Please visit the [project website](#) for further information on [eligibility criteria](#) for applicants, scholarship coverage, etc.

Staff

In September, we welcomed to our team Shpresa Kaçiku, who will be supporting the implementation of the project 'Supporting Effective Governance for Minority Communities in Kosovo'.

total of 16 participants from the Mitrovica North Administrative Office ([MNAO](#)) are targeted and will attend classes twice per week. They will follow the methodology developed by ECMI Kosovo under the project funded by the OSCE High Commissioner on National Minorities. This pilot activity will be conducted until the end of the year and is funded by the Ministry for Foreign Affairs of Finland.

Consultation Rounds on Municipal Situation Analyses on Out-of-School Children

In October, ECMI Kosovo supported municipal officials in 6 municipalities to finalise situation analyses on out-of-school children in their municipalities. The results of the situation analyses were then presented by municipal officials in each municipality in the form of consultation roundtables with representatives from other municipal departments, school directors, teachers and local NGOs. The results of the situation analyses will serve as a basis for the development of municipal action plans to increase access to education and retention in education. These activities are part of a project implemented in partnership with UNICEF which aims at reducing the numbers of out-of-school children in following 6 Kosovo municipalities: Fushë Kosovë/Kosovo Polje, Obiliq/Obilić, Ferizaj/Uroševac, Istog/Istok, Klinë/Klina, Pejë/Peć.



Awareness Raising and Advocacy for Increased Action for Economic Empowerment of Roma, Ashkali and Egyptian Women

During the month of October, ECMI Kosovo, in cooperation with the Network of Roma, Ashkali and Egyptian Women Organizations of Kosovo ([NRAEWOK](#)) and D&D Business Support Centre, conducted strategic meetings with the aim of raising awareness and advocating for greater action on the economic empowerment of Roma, Ashkali and Egyptian women with the following ministries and stakeholders: Ministry of Labor and Social Welfare, Ministry of Communities and Return, Ministry of Trade and Industry, Small and Medium Enterprises Support Agency, Agency for Gender Equality at the Office of the Prime Minister, Women Chamber of Commerce, Women Business Association "She-Era". ECMI and NRAEWOK also organised a Review Committee Meeting to review the draft report on "Promoting the Economic Empowerment of Roma, Ashkali and Egyptian Women in Kosovo." The committee participants identified gaps in the report and provided valuable comments and suggestions. This report will be presented in a conference on 4 December, from 10-12:30 in Hotel Prishtina. These activities were conducted in the framework of the project 'Promoting the Economic Empowerment of Roma, Ashkali and Egyptian Women', supported by UN Women, UNDP and the EU.

Towards Mainstreaming Community Rights within Kosovo Civil Service - Training of Trainers (ToT)

In October, ECMI Kosovo and the Kosovo Institute for Public Administration (KIPA) co-operated in the organisation of the first module of training of trainers (ToT) designed to equip a group of talented and motivated individuals with the necessary skills and knowledge to provide an effective, interactive and tailor-made training on community rights for Kosovo civil servants. Participants have been selected jointly by ECMI Kosovo and KIPA through an open call for applications. The ultimate goal will be to integrate this training on community rights into the programme for Kosovo civil servants, in co-operation with KIPA. The first module of the ToT, on training methodology, was delivered by ECMI Kosovo and KIPA on 26-27 October in Prizren. An interactive and participatory approach was adopted: in addition to presentations provided by KIPA and ECMI Kosovo trainers, participants were also required to hold short presentations, and discussions, role plays and other exercises organised. The following sessions of the ToT will take place in November and will focus on community rights, based on the training curriculum previously developed by ECMI Kosovo in consultation with KIPA. Participants who successfully complete all modules and pass a final test will receive a certificate by ECMI Kosovo and KIPA. This activity was conducted in the framework of the project '*Supporting Effective Governance for Minority Communities in Kosovo*,' funded by the Swiss Federal Department of Foreign Affairs (FDFA).



Working to Improve Governance for Minority Communities in Kosovo – Project Meeting with Stakeholders

On 30 October 2013, ECMI Kosovo organised a meeting with stakeholders to discuss the achievements, challenges and way forward of the project '*Supporting Effective Governance for Minority Communities in Kosovo*,' funded by the Swiss FDFA. The meeting was attended by over twenty heads and representatives from central level institutions – including the Office for Community Affairs (OCA), the Office of the Language Commissioner (OLC), the Kosovo Assembly Committee on the Rights and Interests of Communities and Returns (CRICR), the Consultative Council for Communities (CCC), and the Kosovo Institute of Public Administration (KIPA) – as well as the embassy of Switzerland in Kosovo and civil society organisations (CSD and CDKD). During the meeting, participants provided interesting comments and suggestions related to the project, and to challenges facing communities and institutions in Kosovo. These insights will be taken into account for the remaining implementation of the project up to 31 December, as well as in the design of further activities in the future.

Four Dialogue Sessions between Minority CSOs and Kosovo Assembly Members

During October, ECMI Kosovo, in partnership with CSD and NRAEWOK, organized four (4) dialogue sessions between minority CSOs and Kosovo Assembly members. These dialogue sessions aimed to provide an opportunity to CSO representatives from all minority communities in Kosovo

to raise concrete issues of concern with their Assembly Members. This dialogue session is part of the project '*Empowering Civil Society to Participate Effectively in Policy and Decision-Making Processes through Dialogue with Government Institutions*', funded by the European Union Office in Kosovo.

Workshop on Drafting the 2014-2018 Strategy for Communities and Returns

On 17-19 October, ECMI Kosovo, in co-operation with the Ministry for Communities and Returns (MCR), organised a three-day workshop in Durrës, Albania for the Inter-Ministerial Working Group on the Drafting of the 2014-2018 Strategy for Communities and Returns. At this workshop, the MCR presented a draft of the 2014-2018 Strategy and received feedback and input from the Working Group. The activity was funded by the Norwegian and British Embassies in Kosovo.

Institutional Developments

Consultative Council for Communities

On the plenary session held on 29 October, the Council discussed the lack of fulfillment of quotas reserved for members of non-majority communities at public universities. The Council proposed to meet with the Dean's office at the University of Prishtina 'Hasan Prishtina' and MEST to clarify this important matter. The Council members were also planning to organise a workshop to draft their annual action plan for the year 2014.

During the plenary session, ECMI Kosovo also introduced the Ethno-Political Map, a tool which provides a wealth of information on communities in Kosovo. The Map is currently being revised and updated, and is foreseen to be handed over to the Council upon its completion. The monitoring of the Council and the revision of the Ethno-Political Map are supported by the Swiss FDFA within the framework of the project '*Supporting Effective Governance for Minority Communities in Kosovo*.'

Committee for the Rights and Interests of Communities and Returns (CRICR)

The CRICR met on 8 October where the Working Group on monitoring the implementation of the Law on the Protection and Promotion of Communities and their Members reported that they are finalizing the Report on the Monitoring of the Law on Communities which will be presented before the Committee once all the data is gathered and verified. The CRICR approved two draft laws: Draft Law no.04/L-196 on the Village Zymi i Hasit and Draft Law no. 04/L-202 on permit and license system. The monitoring of CRICR is conducted in the framework of the project '*Supporting Effective Governance for Minority Communities in Kosovo*,' funded by the Swiss Federal Department of Foreign Affairs (FDFA).

Political Developments

Local Elections Held in Kosovo

On 3 November, local elections were held throughout Kosovo, under the supervision of the Central Election Commission (CEC). This was the first election to take place under the Kosovo legal framework in northern Kosovo, as outlined by the 19 April agreement between Belgrade and

Prishtinë/Priština. The election campaign officially began on 3 October, with 51 lists run by minority community representatives running for municipal assemblies and 44 candidates from minority communities campaigning for mayor.

With 47% overall participation, the overall turnout in Kosovo for these elections was more or less similar to previous local and central elections. However, participation in Serb-majority municipalities leaped compared to the local elections held previously to reach the highest rates Kosovo-wide (between 54% and 68%). The CEC reported that mayors were elected in ten (10) municipalities, while the remaining municipalities will elect mayors during the second round of voting on December 1. The following Serb parties qualified for the ballot: Samostalna liberalna stranka (SLS), Građanska inicijativa Srpska (GIS), Savez kosovskih Srba i Srpska narodna partija Kosova.

The 3 November elections were marked with several incidents in the north. In North Mitrovica, at 17.00, a masked group entered a voting centre and attacked the OSCE staff while throwing tear gas, causing the polling stations in the north to close earlier. Northern municipalities reported that roughly 20 percent of the voting population cast ballots in the election. The UN has condemned the violence that occurred in the north, while the Ambassadors of EU Member States declared the elections fair in the absence of serious problems, with the exception of the incidents in the north. Kosovo leaders declared the elections a success overall, despite the turmoil that resulted in the north. On 6 November, it was decided that due to the incidents that occurred on the day of elections, voting will be repeated at three polling stations in North Mitrovica on 17 November.

For further information, ECMI Kosovo has recently released an [Information Bulletin](#) that presents a preliminary analysis of the results after the first round of the local elections, focusing on the Serb community and including conclusions from the voter education campaign implemented throughout the pre-election period and the observation mission deployed on the day of the elections.

European Commission published its 2013 Progress Report on Kosovo

In October, the European Commission published the Progress Report on Kosovo discussing the progress that Kosovo has made on its way towards European integration. The report referenced specific shortcomings regarding minorities. Although the legal framework in Kosovo guarantees minority representation, it is not always achieved in practice. For example, the report affirms that in the police and judiciary proportional representation of minorities must be improved. Minority groups still suffer from a lack of access to education. For the Roma, Ashkali and Egyptian communities, the report states that education, social services and civil registration needs improvement. Moreover, the Serbian language is still not accessible as an official language outside of Serb-dominated municipalities.

EU starts SAA negotiations with Kosovo

On 28 October, negotiations of the Stabilisation and Association Agreement (SAA) between the European Union and Kosovo began in Prishtinë/Priština. The SAA will be the first contractual relationship between Kosovo and the EU and represent an important step in Kosovo's European integration process. Some of the aims of the agreement will be to gradually establish a free-trade area, harmonise Kosovo's legislation to meet EU rules and establish cooperation in a number of areas such as justice, education, social affairs, culture and environment.

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About ECMI Kosovo

ECMI Kosovo is the principal non-governmental organisation engaged with minority issues in Kosovo, with the overarching aim to develop inclusive, representative, community-sensitive institutions that support a stable multi-ethnic Kosovo. ECMI Kosovo contributes to the developing, strengthening and implementation of relevant legislation, supports the institutionalisation of communities-related governmental bodies, and enhances the capacity of civil society actors and the government to engage with one another in a constructive and sustainable way.

Our address is:

Prishtinë/Priština office:

Str. Nëna Terezë
Nr. 41, Apt. 29
10000 Prishtinë/Priština, Kosovo
Tel: +381 (0)38 224473
Email: info@ecmikosovo.org

Mitrovica/Mitrovicë office:

Str. Čika Jovina Nr. 3, I floor
38220 Mitrovica/Mitrovicë North,
Kosovo
Tel: +381 (0) 64 00 55 488
+386 (0) 49 44 63 65
E-mail: lazarevic@ecmikosovo.org

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